LONDON ROAD SURGERY

Website: www.thelondonroadsurgery.co.uk

Telephone: 01268 765533

**NEWSLETTER June 2024**

Welcome to the practice newsletter. In it you will find some useful information, especially if you are not able to use a computer. **However, there are references to important websites and it might be useful if you have a friend or relative who could gain access to the relevant information for you. This is a bumper issue this month as there are lots of campaigns listed for July 2024. Please see end of the newsletter.**

**All prescription requests must be made online via the NHS App or via Online Services accessed by using the London Road Surgery website. Alternatively, you can post your request through our letterbox or send it by Royal Mail.**

**We are experiencing a high demand for appointments please ask your local Pharmacist for advice or use e-consult online consultation and receive a reply within 48 hours. Pharmacy First is a new campaign that allows the Pharmacists to treat 7 conditions. Please ask your Pharmacist for more information.**

**e-consults or Online Consultations**

**We have available via the website** [www.thelondonroadsurgery.co.uk](http://www.thelondonroadsurgery.co.uk) **a platform for consulting online a clinical or admin queries. This is called e-consult. Please follow the instructions to submit your query. You will get a response within 48 hours.**

**New Reception Staff**

We have new staff who have joined our reception team. Please be patient while they deal with your queries. Our reception staff are now called Healthcare Navigators because they can sign post you to Health Care Professionals who support the doctors in primary care.

Thank you for your kind comments for some of our new reception staff.

These staff are trained professionals and if unable to support you they will refer you back to the doctor. These are: Pharmacists, Paramedic, Social Prescriber, Mental Health First Contact Practitioner, and retail Pharmacists. We also use the weekend appointments available to all the practices in Wickford.

**Ideas and Suggestions**

Please let us know if you have any ideas or suggestions by writing to us via the email address or by post.

Thank you.

**Veteran Friendly Accreditation**

**We are accredited as an Armed Forces veteran friendly accredited GP practice. Dr Richards is the Lead GP for this.**

**Patient Contact Details**

**Please keep us up to date with your contact details either by popping a note through our letterbox or by emailing us at** londonroadsurgery@nhs.net

**Last month we had 660 patients with no mobile number on their record. Please email us with your mobile number and email address.**

**Primary Care Network (PCN) Staff**

**In line with NHS England guidance and the development of Primary Care Networks (PCN’s) some new allied Health Care Professionals have joined the team at London Road Surgery. We have a Paramedic and 2 Advanced Nurse Practitioners who can treat minor illness. We also have a Nurse Practitioner who is studying to become an Advanced Nurse Practitioner. These staff members join the doctors and nurses and the new Social Prescriber and Mental Health First Contact Practitioner to help you.**

**To assist you with your request to see a clinician our Receptionists/Care Navigators will ask you the reason for your appointment so that they can guide you to the correct clinician for your condition.**

**PCN Pharmacists – now work at the surgery and you may be contacted by them before you see a doctor. They can sort minor illnesses as well as review all medication.**

**We encourage self-care and there are lots of information on our website and NHS App.**

**Local Pharmacists are happy to discuss with you about your minor illness and we can refer you to them using our clinical system. They will call you back in a few hours.**

**Basildon & Brentwood CCG website also has Health Information** <https://basildonandbrentwoodccg.nhs.uk/>

**Looking after yourself**

**We continue to offer free health checks for patients aged 40-74 who have not had a health check in 5 years and for those over 75 years.**

**Please call reception to book your health check with Natalie or Mel our Paramedic.**

**Contacting Us**

**Please do not use our email address to send any clinical queries to us. Please call the practice to make an appointment or use e-consult (see above). Please use NHS App to order repeat medication. We can process requests faster this way.**

**Patient Group Activity**

We have a new noticeboard in our Waiting Room and the Chair – Sue Bunney will be coordinating new campaigns for the group to action. They have recently done a survey and their minutes are on our website. The group will be promoting the NHS App.

**Next Patient Group meeting: Wednesday 17 July 2024 at 1pm**

**All are welcome!**

**Website**

We understand that lots of our patients are unable to view our website if you know a member of your community is housebound or without any computer access, please print this and deliver it to them. London Road Surgery thank you for this kindness.

**Healthwatch Essex**

<https://healthwatchessex.org.uk/>

Is an independent charity set up under the Health & Social Care Act 2012 and they use your voice to improve health and care in Essex. They undertake high-quality research and engagement to uncover your experience of services and use it to shape health and care. They are also proud hosts to the Essex Neurology Network.

They can help you find out about and access health and social care services through our Information & Guidance Service**. Call 0300 500 1895, text 07712395398** between 10am and 2pm on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Outside of those times, you can use it to leave them a message. Check out how to get involved!

info@healthwatchessex.org.uk

Message on **07712395398**, Monday - Friday, 9am to 4:30pm

**Looking After Your Mental Wellbeing**

Looking after our mental wellbeing sometimes falls behind on our list of priorities. But keeping mentally well helps us to keep physically well too. Visit this website for some tips on how to look after your mind: <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>

**Free listening services**

These services offer confidential advice from trained volunteers. You can talk about anything that is troubling you, no matter how difficult:

Call 116 123 to talk to [Samaritans](https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/), or email:  jo@samaritans.org for a reply within 24 hours.

Text "SHOUT" to 85258 to contact the [Shout Crisis Text Line](https://www.giveusashout.org/), or text "YM" if you're under 19.

If you are under 19, you can also call 0800 1111 to talk to [Childline](https://www.childline.org.uk/). The number will not appear on your phone bill.

**The Essex Wellbeing Service 0300** **303 9988**

We provide Essex residents (excluding Southend-On-Sea and Thurrock) with access to health checks; stop smoking services; weight management courses; and emotional health and wellbeing support.

We also support Essex organisations at work via our three-tiered Working Well Accreditation. This consists of workplace health and wellbeing sessions; Mental Health First Aid training; and the Working Well Accreditation itself where organisations can be recognised for their commitment to staff health and wellbeing.

EWS also runs a volunteering service where we recruit and connect volunteers with Essex residents in need of support with everyday tasks, social isolation and making long-term friendships.

The Service is commissioned by Essex County Council. But we couldn’t do this without our amazing alliance of partners…

**Provide CIC**

Provide CIC is a Community Interest Company (social enterprise) that delivers a broad range of health and social care services in the community throughout Essex, Cambridgeshire and East Anglia.

Provide works from a variety of community settings, such as three community hospitals, community clinics, schools, nursing homes and primary care settings, as well as within people's homes to provide more than 40 services to children, families and adults.

Provide CIC has been commissioned by Essex County Council to deliver the Essex Wellbeing Service, in partnership with all the organisations listed on this page.

**Priority Digital Health**

Priority Digital Health (PDH) build digital solutions which empower better self-management and service-management of patients' health and wellbeing.

PDH ensures people get the help and support they need, swiftly, whilst remaining true to their 'Tell Your Story Once' mantra.

PDH’s speciality is disease prevention; their background is in changing behaviour, and their focus is cost-saving and service efficiencies – but not at the expense of user experience.

They have three main products: The Priority Platform (customisable case management software); Diabetes Book & Learn (connecting people with Diabetes to the right education); and AmaraHealth™ (a whole-body health and wellbeing app).

For Essex Wellbeing Service, PDH provides the case management system that digitises lifestyle bookings; volunteer sign-up and management; and referral or self-referral for support with everyday tasks.

PDH provides their marketing services for the EWS and Working Well website and social media. EWS also have access to PDH’s AmaraHealth™ app where Essex residents can track, analyse, and manage their whole-body health inside one app.

**Age Well East**

Age Well East offers community friendship services to anyone in Essex who is over 18 with an aim to end loneliness. They provide one to one volunteer friendship (befriending), pen friending and access to social groups and activities to empower people to live happier and healthier.

Age Well East believes everyone deserves to age well and they have been empowering people in later years since 1950. Their knowledgeable staff and volunteers provide excellent support services which are easily available.

They understand that changes in circumstances make people particularly susceptible to loneliness. When left ignored, loneliness can escalate from a temporary situation to a chronic challenge, which the NHS estimates as having the same detrimental impact as smoking 15 cigarettes a day on health deterioration. In Essex alone, as many as 80,000 people are thought to be lonely, which is one of many reasons Age Well East is so committed to providing excellent and trusted support.

**HCRG Care Group**

HCRG Care Group changes lives by transforming health and care. They are one of the UK’s leading independent providers of community health and care services, working with health and care commissioners and communities to transform services with a focus on experience, efficiency and improved outcomes.

The children and family healthy lifestyle service is here to support your family in making long term, sustainable adjustments to suit your lifestyle. If you are unsure if your child is within the healthy weight range, you can check their body mass index (BMI) using the NHS BMI Calculator. The calculator takes into account your child’s age and sex as well as their height and weight.

If you find your child is outside the healthy weight range - don’t panic! There are lots that the team can do to support you in making healthier lifestyle choices and to help your child achieve a healthier weight as they grow.

Being active and making balanced food choices is important, but HCRG Care Group will work with your family to make sure our support is the right offer for you and your family.

HCRG Care Group’s teams have lots of resources that they would like to make available to your family. If you would like to register your interest or find out more about what HCRG can offer your family, please contact EWS.

HCRG Care Group also runs Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service on behalf of Essex County Council.

**Rural Community Council of Essex**

Many Essex villages exude an air of prosperity. However, behind the affluent facade there is evidence of hidden deprivation, and with it the potential for people to be unreasonably disadvantaged by living in a rural location.

Rural communities are the reason for the existence of the Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) and remain the focus of the vast majority of their work, but they do provide some services, notably Community Agents Essex and United in Kind Coaches on a countywide basis.

Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) works to provide local communities with the skills, resources and expertise necessary to achieve a thriving and sustainable future.

RCCE provides support and facilitation for local community organisations and projects; develops initiatives that improve the life chances of disadvantaged people and families; and provides an influential voice for rural communities in Essex.

Part of their attention focuses on helping people who may experience disadvantage and exclusion through factors such as low wage employment, the high cost of housing, lack of access to essential services and a scarcity of public transport.

**Terrence Higgins Trust**

Terrence Higgins Trust (THT) team of specialist health and wellbeing coaches will work to re-engage those who have disengaged from or who have lost trust in the system.

The service works closely with a diverse range of populations across Essex, and in partnership with the wider EWS service to maximize opportunities for LGBT+, Traveller, Roma, and Racially Minoritised communities, as well as Drug and Alcohol Misusers, Homeless / those at risk of Homelessness, as well as those within the criminal justice system.

THT believes that involving and empowering local communities, particularly disadvantaged groups, and young people is central to both promotion of excellent Health and Wellbeing and the reduction of health inequalities.
THT champions that partnership approaches to service delivery, combined with innovation, improve engagement with service users, contribute to directly addressing marginalisation and powerlessness underpinning health and social inequalities and are effective in building sustainable communities.

THT is also the UK’s largest HIV and Sexual and Reproductive Health charity.

Building upon the already excellent established working relationship between THT and Provide in Essex the THT Essex Wellbeing Service (EWS) partnership will engage with and empower Seldom Heard From Communities.

Services

* [Stop Smoking](https://www.essexwellbeingservice.co.uk/services/stop-smoking)
* [Physical Activity](https://www.essexwellbeingservice.co.uk/services/physical-activity)
* [Social Isolation](https://www.essexwellbeingservice.co.uk/services/social-isolation)
* [Mental Health](https://www.essexwellbeingservice.co.uk/services/mental-health)
* [Alcohol Reduction](https://www.essexwellbeingservice.co.uk/services/alcohol-reduction)
* [Sleep](https://www.essexwellbeingservice.co.uk/services/sleep)
* [Health Checks](https://www.essexwellbeingservice.co.uk/services/health-checks)
* [Child Lifestyle Service](https://www.essexwellbeingservice.co.uk/services/child-lifestyle-service)
* [Weight Management](https://www.essexwellbeingservice.co.uk/services/weight-management)

T: 0300 303 9988

E: provide.essexwellbeing@nhs.net

**Opening Hours**

Monday to Friday 8.00am - 7.00pm

Saturday 9.00am to 12.00pm

All enquiries, will be responded to during the opening hours above

**Complaints / Feedback**

T: 0300 303 9951

E: provide.customerservices@nhs.net

**NHS App**

If you have a smartphone, you can download the NHS App which allows you to order repeat prescriptions and book appointments quickly and easily.

We encourage use of the NHS App as this saves time for the patients. It will integrate with secondary care so you can see future hospital appointments.

**Contact Details**

Don’t forget to let us know if you have new phone number or change address. You can email us or call us.

**The Good Grief Trust**

**Website** [**www.thegoodgrieftrust.org**](http://www.thegoodgrieftrust.org)

If you have been affected by a sudden bereavement during this crisis and need support, advice and guidance.

PLEASE CALL; SUDDEN BEREAVEMENT HELP 0800 2600 400,

OPERATING HOURS: 10AM – 4PM MONDAY – FRIDAY.

**Mental Health Information**

VitaMinds offer a free and confidential NHS Service and Psychological talking therapies. They offer support for Anxiety, Low mood, Depression, Panic attacks, Social anxiety, sleep problems, PTSD, OCD and specific phobias. You can self-refer online vitahealthgroup.co.uk or call 01268 977 171 Monday – Friday 8am – 8pm and Saturdays 9am – 12.30pm or Out of Hours emotional support 24/7 01268 977 171

**Contact Us Online**

We have updated our website and added a tab called Contact Us Online. This is for patients to send us administrative queries or medical issues. Hopefully this will free up our phone lines for those patients without internet access.

**Useful Telephone Numbers**

Boots Allianz The Wick 01268 574018

Boots Mayflower 01268 820235

Boots Willowdale 01268 761911

Co-op 01268 970532

Garbetts 01268 732042

Medipharm 01268 735777

Sainsbury’s 01268 270282

Shadforths 01268 733313

Shotgate 01268 768547

Tesco Mayflower 01268 367647

Wells Pharmacy 01268 762605

**CARING FOR OTHERS**

If you are caring for a relative, you can access information & advice, specialist support, groups & activities through Carers First. Carers First is a charity commissioned by Essex County Council:

Telephone: 0300 303 1555

Email: hello@CarersFIRST.org.uk

Please let us know if you are an unpaid Carer and if you need support

**Useful Resources:**

**Alzheimer’s Society:** 01245 260911 3 Lockside Marina Chelmsford CM2 6HF

**National Domestic Violence Helpline**: 0808 2000 247 https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk

**NSPCC helpline**: 0808 800 5000

**ChildLine**: 0800 1111

**MIND**: www.mind.org.uk

**YoungMinds**: https://youngminds.org.uk

**ICON**: Babies cry: You can cope https://iconcope.org

**IRISi:** irisi.org/iris/find-your-local-iris-site

**July 2024**

**Summer health**

Keeping yourself safe in the summer months is important, as new risks arise with the onset of the summer months. Some of the key risks of hot weather and how to prevent them are discussed here:

**Hay fever**

Hay fever is a common allergy to pollen which can cause sneezing, itching, coughing, watery eyes and more. Hay fever usually only occurs in the summer and although it’s not a serious issue, it can be difficult to deal with. To try and prevent hay fever, you can put Vaseline on your nostrils, wear sunglasses, shower and change your clothes when coming in from outside, and take antihistamines. If your hay fever is causing serious issues or you are struggling to carry on with your day then have a chat with your pharmacist.

**Dehydration**

Dehydration is especially common when the weather is hot. Signs of dehydration can include dizziness, thirst, dark wee, and dry lips and skin. Avoiding dehydration is important. You should make sure that you’re drinking plenty of water, that you cool down and stay in the shade, and consume foods that are also hydrating, such as fruit. It’s particularly important to keep an eye on your small children or babies.

**Heatstroke**

Heatstroke can be caused by too much contact with the sun, being outside in very hot weather or exercising in hot weather. To avoid heatstroke, you should stay in the shade, drink plenty of water, try to avoid being outside in the middle of the day and wear light clothing. Heatstroke symptoms can include dizziness, nausea, cramps, a high temperature and other similar symptoms.
If you suspect that you or someone you know has heatstroke, you should try to move somewhere cool, remove clothes, drink water and cover the skin in cool water. If symptoms seem more serious or efforts to cool them/yourself down aren’t working, you should call 999.

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/seasonal-health/heatwave-how-to-cope-in-hot-weather/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hay-fever/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/dehydration/>

<https://www.redcross.org.uk/first-aid/learn-first-aid/heatstroke>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/heat-exhaustion-heatstroke/>

**Skin cancer**

Skin cancer can be scary and worrying, and doing what you can to avoid the development of skin cancer is essential. Making sure you’re consistently applying suncream, checking UV regularly, wearing long clothes and staying out of direct sunlight all reduce your chances of developing skin cancer. Staying away from artificial UV, such as sunbeds, is also very important. Putting your safety first is vital.

<https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/skin-cancer/about-skin-cancer>

**Domestic abuse and violence**

Different kinds of abuse and violent behaviour are all dangerous, and reaching out for help, no matter how insignificant you feel it is, is really important. Talking to someone you trust or a medical professional can help you to figure out what to do, and how to deal with what you’re experiencing. Abuse can be emotional, physical, sexual or threatening. There are various people you can speak to on the NHS website below. Using these resources is the first step to making things better. If someone has seriously hurt you, or you’re concerned about your safety, you should try to call 999.

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/getting-help-for-domestic-violence/>

**parkruns**

Taking part in a parkrun can help you to stay fit, challenge yourself and meet new people. Taking part is a fun way to exercise and stay healthy. parkrun is a 5k run that happens every Saturday morning and is completely free. Regularly exercising is important for your mental and physical wellbeing. To find your local parkrun, use the link below:

<https://www.parkrun.org.uk/>

**The Herbert Protocol**

The Herbert Protocol is a scheme that encourages families and carers to put together information on a vulnerable person that can easily be accessed if they go missing. This scheme is used for people who are suffering with dementia, and aims to give the police as quickly as possible the information they will need to find the vulnerable person. If you know someone who may benefit from this protocol, then you should look into it and find out what information you might need. It could make a significant difference to how quickly a vulnerable person is found.

[https://www.ageuk.org.uk/calderdale...test-news/articles/2018/the-herbert-protocol/](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/calderdaleandkirklees/about-us/latest-news/articles/2018/the-herbert-protocol/)

**Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (JIA)**

JIA is the most common type of arthritis in children and teenagers. JIA is caused by autoimmune system issues and can be very painful. Symptoms usually include stiffness, warm and tender joints, unexplained tiredness, appetite loss and a high temperature. Getting your child checked if they have any of these symptoms is important, as catching it as early as possible may help with symptoms in the long term.

<https://versusarthritis.org/about-arthritis/conditions/juvenile-idiopathic-arthritis/>

**Group B Strep Support Awareness Month (1st - 31st July)**

Ensuring you’re aware of the process of testing for Group B strep is highly important. Group B strep doesn’t have any symptoms, so making sure you test is key. The most important time to take a test is during pregnancy, and you need to catch it as early as possible in order to have the most minimal effects on your baby.

Every month in the UK, an average of 66 babies are diagnosed with a Group B strep infection. Out of these 66 babies, four will die. Not everyone is offered a test in pregnancy, and you’re most likely to be offered a test if you’ve had a baby with strep previously. During July, there are many different events taking place to raise awareness about Group B strep. If you’d like to find out how you can get involved or fundraise yourself, you can use the Group B Strep Support website link below:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/group-b-strep/>

<https://gbss.org.uk/info-support/group-b-strep-testing/should-i-get-a-group-b-strep-test/>

<https://gbss.org.uk/>

**Hyperpigmentation / Melasma Awareness Month (1st - 31st July)**

Melasma is a common skin condition in adults that causes patches of skin to become darkened and brown or grey, usually on the face. It’s often more prominent in the summer months compared to the winter. Usually, it’s caused by hormonal changes such as pregnancy or the contraceptive pill. It can also run in families.
If you’re concerned about what you think could be melasma, you should seek advice from a GP, and if they’re unsure, they may take a biopsy. If you want to avoid melasma, you should try to avoid direct sunlight, skin lighteners or chemical peels.

<https://knowyourskin.britishskinfoundation.org.uk/condition/melasma/>

<https://sussexcds.co.uk/patient-information/melasma/>

**UV Safety Month (1st - 31st July)**

Ensuring your skin is kept safe whilst in the sun is very important to prevent issues like cancer. The most effective ways of keeping yourself protected are using suncream, staying in the shade and wearing covering clothing. It’s important that your sun cream is at least SPF30, and UVA approved with 4 or 5 stars. It’s also important to remember that it’s not just hot weather that can burn you, and even if it doesn’t look sunny outside, the UV may still be high.

Children are at greater risk from sunburn, especially when around water. Whenever your child gets out of the pool, you should dry them and reapply sun cream. Even if your sun cream is waterproof, it’s better to be completely sure that they’re protected. Making sure that they’re not in direct sunlight in the middle of the day is vital.

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/seasonal-health/sunscreen-and-sun-safety/>

[https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/ab...-uv-and-cancer/sun-safety#accordion\_children0](https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/causes-of-cancer/sun-uv-and-cancer/sun-safety#accordion_children0)

**Good Care Month (1st - 31st July)**

Good Care Month is all about celebrating the people who work in health and social care every day. Working in care can be an emotionally and physically difficult job, so taking the time to take care of those who take care of others is important. There are three main events taking place this Good Care Month with Well Nel’s Share & Shape, a session on sleep and taking care of your mental health. In order to support Good Care Month, or to access the help and facilities surrounding Good Care Month, please use the link below:
<https://keepingwellnel.nhs.uk/events-activities/good-care-month/>

**Alcohol Awareness Week (1st - 7th July)**

Alcohol Awareness Week is all about focusing on change and good habits. The focus is on understanding the harm that alcohol can do when it’s a consistent part of your life. Alcohol can affect your short-term and long-term health, as well as your emotional wellbeing and relationships.
Alcohol Change UK is aiming to focus on changing the way that alcohol is advertised and marketed. They also want clearer labelling on alcohol bottles as this could help people to realise the impact of alcohol.
The long-term effects of alcohol misuse are important to consider when choosing to drink. Symptoms and effects can include: high blood pressure, stroke, cancer, dementia, infertility and brain damage. These effects can cause life-long issues that may be incurable, and it’s important to consider this when choosing to drink alcohol.

If you’re struggling with alcohol addiction and you’d like to reach out for help and support, there are several places you can go to. Alcoholics Anonymous is one support group that you can reach out to if you’d like to get some help. Looking after yourself and others is important, especially when it comes to struggles with alcohol.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/alcohol-misuse/>

[https://alcoholchange.org.uk/get-in...awareness-week-1/about-alcohol-awareness-week](https://alcoholchange.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/alcohol-awareness-week-1/about-alcohol-awareness-week)

[https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/alcohol-misuse/risks](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/alcohol-misuse/risks/#:~:text=It%20begins%20to%20affect%20the,reaction%20time%20and%20co%2Dordination.)
<https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/>

**National Bereaved Parents Day (3rd July)**

National Bereaved Parents Day is a day focused on those parents who have unfortunately lost a child, at any stage of life. The day aims to bring parents together to gain support from one another. This year the theme is “Love Lives On”. This focuses on remembering children who have passed away. This year, you can order a gift box for yourself or someone you know, containing items to show your support for National Bereaved Parents Day. On Wednesday 3rd July, people will be lighting candles to remember those we have lost.

<https://achildofmine.org.uk/national-bereaved-parents-awareness-day/>

**World Population Day (11th July)**

This day investigates the issues that surround the population of the world, and what we can do to help. The main focus includes aiming to provide contraception for everyone, to try and avoid unwanted pregnancies. It also focuses on making sure the health services available are of a good quality and reliable. To find out how you can support World Population Day, you can use the link below:

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/world-population-day/background>

**South Asian Heritage Month (18th July - 17th August)**

South Asian Heritage Month (SAHM) seeks to commemorate, mark and celebrate South Asian cultures, histories and communities. The reason for this is to celebrate the influence that the South Asian community has had on Britain over the years, in respect of food, music, culture and more. Recognising the links between South Asia and Britain is important, and it’s important to allow people to share their stories and to receive support. To find out more about SAHM, use the link below:

<https://southasianheritage.org.uk/about-the-south-asian-heritage-month/>

**Samaritans Awareness Day (24th July)**

Every year in July, Samaritans aim to highlight that they’re available to talk to you anytime, night or day. The Samaritans are a service used for helping people who are struggling in all types of different ways – often people who are struggling with their mental health.

The Samaritans are there to listen to you and offer you any advice or reassurance they can. You can call, email, write in or find a local support group, as a method of reaching out. You can support Samaritans Awareness Day by posting on social media, using the tag #SamaritansAwarenessDay, and by sharing the downloadable social media assets.

If you’re struggling with your mental health and you’re unsure about where to start and how to improve it, there are a few things you can try. Reaching out to people and trying to connect can make you feel better; talking to someone you trust or even a stranger on a helpline, e.g., Samaritans, may help you. Trying to be physically active, if you can, or just stepping outside for a few minutes can improve your mood. Learning a new skill can help you to feel busy and interested, or doing something you enjoy without any pressure. Helping someone out or showing kindness to others may also help you feel better, and surrounding yourself with people who have a positive impact on your life. Trying out mindfulness and focusing on the present can help you to focus on how you feel in the present moment.

Trying these steps may help you to start feeling better, but if they don’t, you can book an appointment with your GP or use the mental health services online. There’s always someone who can offer you support and find what works for you:

<https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/>

<https://www.samaritans.org/support-us/campaign/samaritans-awareness-day/>

[https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/se...nd-activities/five-steps-to-mental-wellbeing/](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/guides-tools-and-activities/five-steps-to-mental-wellbeing/)

**International Day of Friendship (30th July)**

Friendship is important, not just between people but on a bigger scale too. Having friends can make our lives more meaningful, but friendship between communities and countries can help build a more tolerant world.

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/friendship-day>